

**CH-536**  
**Willett Farmhouse**  
**Pomfret vic.**  
**Private**

**circa 1830-1860**

The Willett House is an example of a popular early-to-mid-19th century Southern Maryland domestic building form. Its 2-story, double-pile side-passage form with two interior brick chimneys along one gable end is typical of numerous extant dwellings of this period in Charles County. The form includes a side passage that serves as a stair hall and double parlors on the first story. This is a modest example of its type and has been significantly altered during subsequent remodellings.

Constructed prior to the Civil War, the house and surrounding farm were owned and occupied by the Willett family for over fifty years. The building is now incorporated into a 1970s suburban subdivision known as "Old Farm."

Inventory No. CH-536

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Listing \_\_\_\_\_  
No X

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Late Federal  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation (brick piers) not visible  
roof side gable: pressed metal shingles  
walls wood frame: aluminum siding  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 7-1

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8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

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Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance circa 1820-1850  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates ca.1820-1850  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation Undefined  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property.)

See Continuation Sheet No. 8-1

CH-536

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, legal records, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Brown, Jack D., et al. *Charles County, Maryland, A History*. Charles County Bicentennial Committee, 1976.

Charles County Land Records. Charles County Courthouse, La Plata, Maryland.

Klapthor, Margaret Brown. *The History of Charles County, Maryland*. La Plata, MD: Charles County Tercentenary, Inc., 1958.

Rivoire, J. Richard. *Homeplaces: Traditional Domestic Architecture of Charles county, Maryland*. La Plata, MD: Charles County community College, 1990.

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 2.078 acres

**Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)**

The property is designated as Parcel 86 on Map 14, Grid 19 on the Charles County Property Map.

**Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)**

The Willett Farmhouse has been associated with Parcel 86, Map 14 since its construction circa 1820-1850.

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11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Kathryn Gettings Smith, Architectural Historian  
organization Charles County Planning Dept. date May 14, 1999  
street & number P.O. Box B telephone 301-645-0689  
city or town La Plata state MD zip code 20646

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12. Property Owner

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name Neil L. & Cherie J. Nutwell  
street & number 9265 Luftschloss Drive telephone 301-934-8340  
city or town Pomfret state MD zip code 20675

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MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
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Section 7 Page 1

Willett Farmhouse  
name of property  
Charles County, Maryland  
county and state

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The Willett House displays a popular early-to-mid-19th century Southern Maryland domestic building form. Its 2-story, double-pile side-passage form with two interior brick chimneys along one gable end is typical of numerous extant dwellings of this period in Charles County. The form includes a side passage that serves as a stair hall and double parlors on the first story. This is a modest example of its type and has been significantly altered during subsequent remodellings.

Located within the "Old Farm" subdivision that once encompassed the original farm surrounding the house, the dwelling stands on a 2-acre lot at the end of one of the subdivision's streets. A new house was erected by the current owners on a lot directly behind the historic building. A few mature trees surround the house, and three outbuildings accompany it on its lot.

The Willett House consists of two parts, the main section being the 2-story double-pile, side-passage part, with an auxillary wing extending off the east gable end. This wing stands 2-stories in heights and is set back so that its rear wall is flush with the rear wall of the main section. A single-flue exterior brick chimney extend up the east gable end of the wing.

The house is reputed to stand on a brick pier foundation that is not visible from the exterior. Its frame walls have been sheathed in aluminum siding, and the side gable roof is covered with pressed decorative metal shingles. A 1-story, shed-roofed porch extends across the front elevation of the wing, and is supported by brick posts with a brick knee-wall below. Throughout the house, the windows have been replaced with 1/1 wood sash windows.

The main section's facade contains two bays. One, the main entrance, holds a single-leaf flush wood door with lights, and is framed by a replacement Colonial-Revival style surround. The second bay has also been altered. It contains a projecting 3-sided bay with a central "picture" window flanked by single 1/1 wood sash windows.

The facade's second story is pierced by three unevenly spaced window openings, all of which contain replacement sash. Any original trim has been encased within the aluminum siding.

Four window apertures pierce the west gable. Two of the windows open onto the first story, while the remaining two light the second and attic stories respectively. Again, the windows have been

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Section 7 Page 2

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replaced.

The rear wall of the Willett House features an enclosed 1-story shed-roofed porch that extends across the entire width of the main section. The porch contains one single-leaf panel-and-light wood door, two 2-light sliding metal windows, and one 1/1 wood sash window. Behind the porch, the original exterior wall of the house retains its original three openings. There is an entry door set just behind the porch door, and two windows with replacement sash. The second story of the rear elevation contains three unevenly spaced windows, like those on the facade.

The east wing of the house contains two openings on the first story of its facade. One holds a single-leaf flush wood door with lights, and the other is filled by a 1/1 wood sash replacement window. Two more replacement windows light the second story of the wing. Two 1/1 sash windows pierce the east gable end of the wing.

A 1-story frame kitchen addition extends off the north wall of the wing and connects up with the enclosed rear porch of the house. This gable-roof addition contains a single-leaf entry door on its east wall along with a 1/1 sash window. Another window pierces its north gable end where a brick chimney flue rises above the roof ridge.

The building's interior has also seen major changes over the years, although the essential floorplan is still evident. The main entrance opens into a stair hall that runs the depth of the house. The single-flight stair features a massive turned newel post and molded handrail with plain square balusters and an open stringer. The narrow-width floors on the first floor appear to be replacements, as the second floor features wide random width flooring.

The stair hall opens into the front parlor. The front and back parlors have been combined with a ceiling beam indicating where the original partition would have been. Neither of the two mantels remain along the east wall where the two chimney stand. One has been enclosed within a closet, while the other is plastered over.

A door located near the northeast corner of the back parlor provides access to the east wing. The single first floor room of the wing is now used as a dining room. It has been entirely redecorated during the first half of the 20th century. The mantel was is a circa-1960s Colonial Revival piece, the walls have



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colonial Revival chair rails added, and the dog-leg stair located in the room's southwest corner is psheathed with circa-1960s wood paneling. In addition, the window trim throughout the first floor of the house has been replaced with simple round-edged casings.

Several original elements remain on the second floor however. The stair rises in a single flight to a second floor stair hall that again runs the depth of the dwelling. Here the floors consist of random-width tongue-and-groove boards. Two doors open into the second floor bedrooms. These doors retain their original trim, as does the door that connects the front and back bedrooms. Again, neither of the two chimney stacks reveals a firebox on this floor. Both are enclosed within closets.

The east wing is acessed via a door in the back bedroom. The single second floor room in the wing is a bedroom and has been recently renovated. A bathromm has been added in the northeast corner, and a skylight pierces the roof.

The house is accompanied by three much later outbuildings, only one of whichis contributing. This is a 1-story, 1930s frame shed or garage. It is open on one gable end and features vertical board siding, a sheet metal roof, and post-in-ground construction.

The remaining two outbuildings consist of a 1-story concrete block shed built in the 1960s, and a 1980s frame garage.

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
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Section 8 Page 1

Willett Farmhouse  
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Constructed prior to the Civil War, the Willett House is significant as an example of a popular domestic building form of the period. Built as a 2-story 3-bay, side-passage building, the house retains its essential form. However, the house has been significantly altered with the majority of its interior and exterior features obscured or removed. The house and surrounding farm were owned and occupied by the Willett family for over fifty years, but is now surrounded by a 1970s suburban subdivision known as "Old Farm."

The property on which the Willett House was constructed was originally a part of a 2,500-acre tract known as "Green Park" granted to Governor Thomas Green in 1648 (see CH-61). ???????????

In 1897, Sarah Willett transferred the property to Albert E. Willett. Albert died intestate in 1933 with his sole heir being Mary A. Snoots. Snoots died intestate as well, in 1946. The land was then sold through trustees to Joseph A. & Mary E. Willett for \$9,600. At this time the property encompassed 109.3 acres. In 1960, the Willetts sold the farm to James W. & Shirley A. Shelton. Shelton subdivided the land for development as a subdivision, cutting out an 8.725-acre lot surrounding the old farm house and selling it to David Michael and Nancy Myers in 1971. Two years later, the current owners acquired the same tract.

The period between 1810 and 1850 brought a revived economic period to Charles County and much of Southern Maryland. The diversification of agriculture from tobacco as the main staple crop, to the production of newly profitable grains and cereals caused a short-lived economic boom. The architectural record reveals that this period of prosperity also brought on a boom in construction of new dwellings and the enlargement of many others.<sup>1</sup>

The availability of manufactured architectural elements and growing communication with northern urban centers resulted in a revolution in Charles County's domestic architecture. The 3-bay side-passage dwelling form, derived from a popular urban form, became the prominent building type in the period leading up to the Civil War. The type was built in both one and two-story examples, and often incorporated a service wing located on one gable end. Double interior or exterior wind chimneys along one gable end were

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<sup>1</sup> J. Richard Rivoire, p. 20-21.

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Willett Farmhouse  
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also a common element of these dwellings.<sup>2</sup>

The Willett Farmhouse is a typical example of this popular early-to-mid-19th century domestic form. While its form and layout remain intact, much of its original materials and decorative elements have been obscured or removed.

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<sup>2</sup> J. Richard Rivoire, pp.20-21.

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Willetts Farmhouse  
name of property  
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**HISTORIC CONTEXT:**

**Geographic Organization:** Western Shore

**Chronological/Development Period (s):**

Agricultural-Industrial Transition,  
1815-1870

**Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):**

ARCHITECTURE

**RESOURCE TYPE(S)**

**Category:** Building

**Historic Environment:** Rural

**Historic Function (s):** DOMESTIC/Single dwelling

**Known Design Source:** Unknown

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Willett Farmhouse  
name of property  
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**Chain of Title:**

???: to Sarah M. Willett

1897: Sarah M. Willett to Albert E. Willett

1933: Albert E. Willett died intestate  
Heir: Mary A. Snoots

1946: Mary A. Snoots died intestate

August 31, 1950: Thomas C. Carrico & Albert E. Brault, trustees to Joseph A. & Mary E. Willett  
\$9,600  
109.3 acres, "Part of Green's Inheritance"  
Equity proceedings #55A: Mary A. Snoots owned tract at her death  
Heirs: Lawrence E. Snoots (widower, remarried to Margaret L. Snoots, son, Lawrence E. Snoots, Jr.), Mary S. Rust (sister)  
Charles County Land Records  
Liber PCM 91 Folio 281

January 8, 1960: Joseph A. Willett to James W. & Shirley A. Shelton  
109.3 acres, north side of state road from White Plains to Pomfret  
"Part of Green's Inheritance" or "Green's Inheritance"  
Charles County Land Records  
Liber 146 Folio 355

October 22, 1971: Jerome Selby Myers, Contract purchaser & James W. & Shirley A. Shelton to David Michael & Nancy D. Myers  
Contract sale made September 10, 1962  
8.725 acres

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Charles County Land Records  
Liber 247 Folio 484

July 12, 1973:

David Michael & Nancy Davis Myers to  
Neil Loy & Cherie Jane Nutwell  
8.725 acres, "Land of James W.  
Shelton"  
Plat Book 17 Folio 100  
Charles County Land Records  
Liber 296 Folio 162

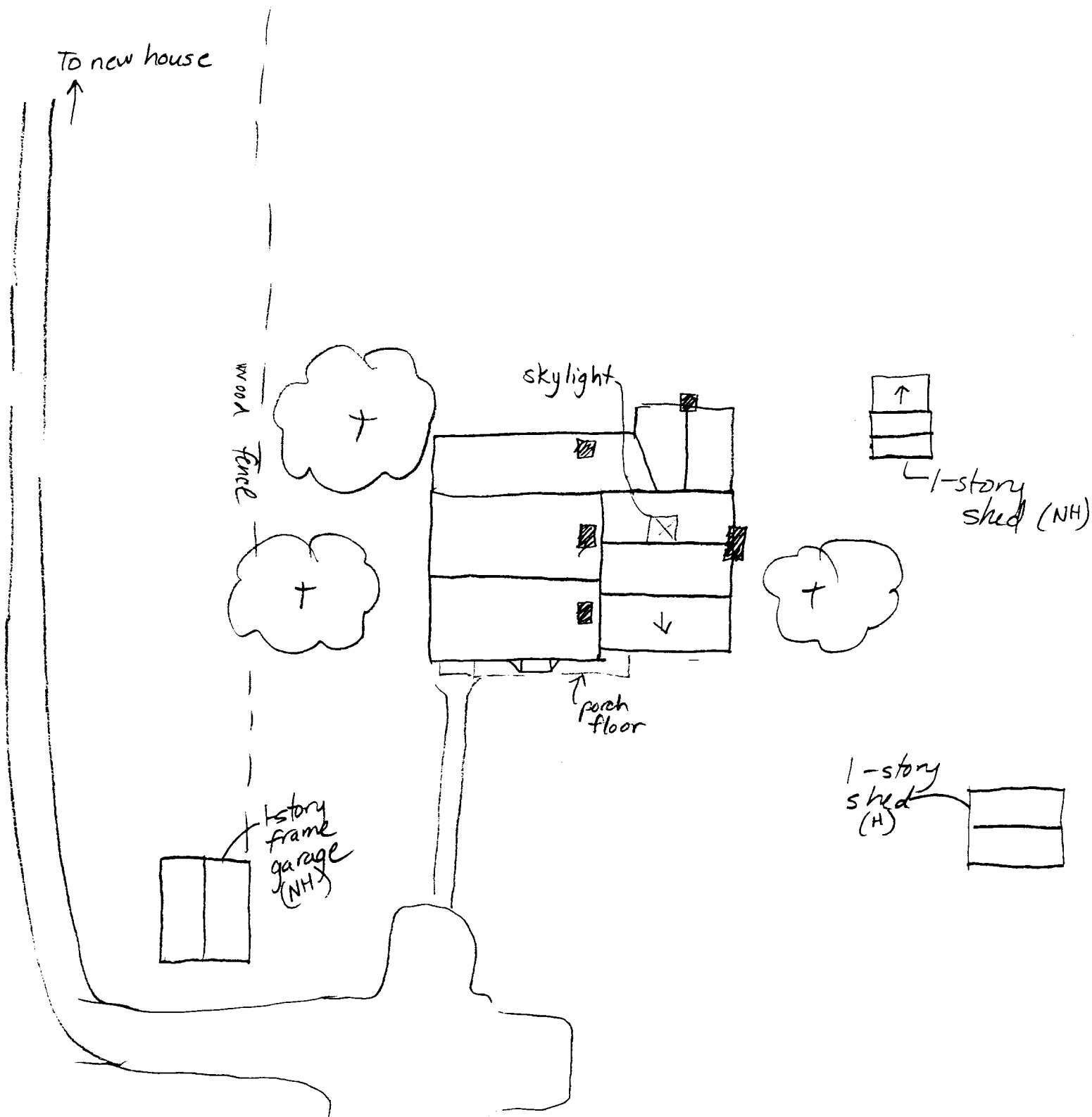
# RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

4/99



WILLETT FARM HOUSE  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD  
POMFRET VIC.

CH-536



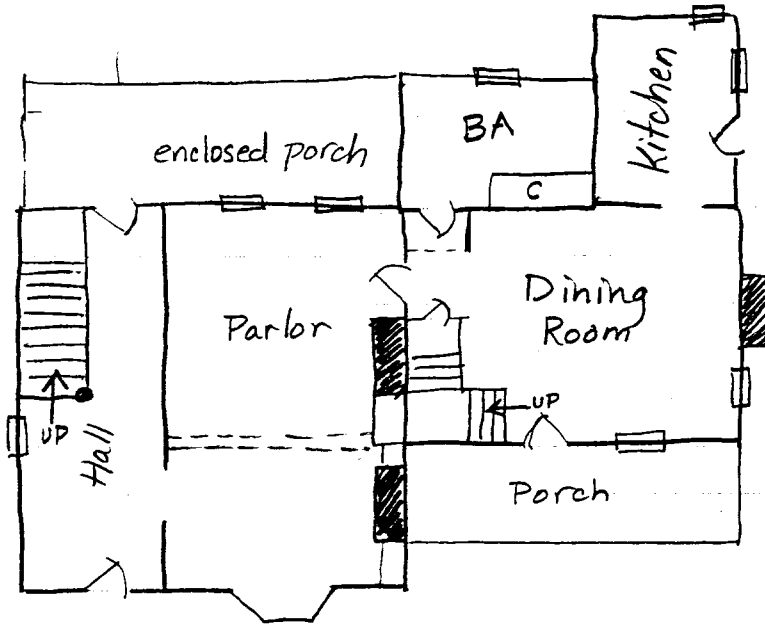
# RESOURCE SKETCH PLAN

4/99

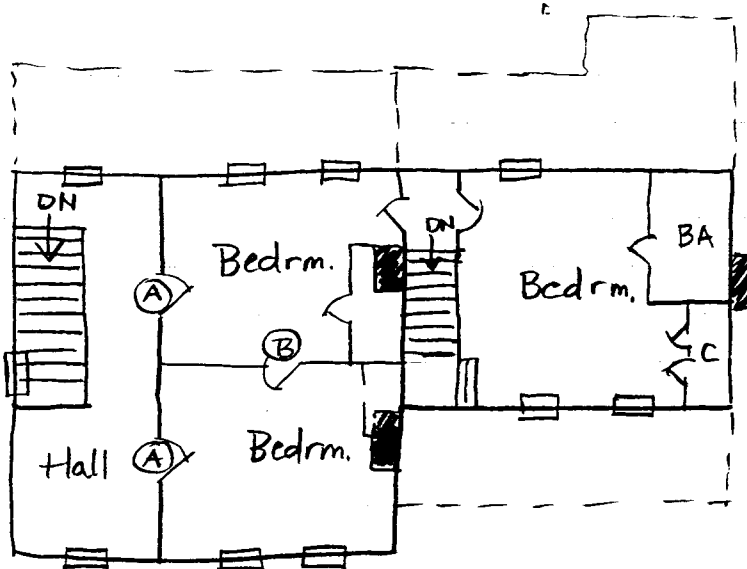


WILLETT FARMHOUSE  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD  
POMFRET VIC.

CH-536



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

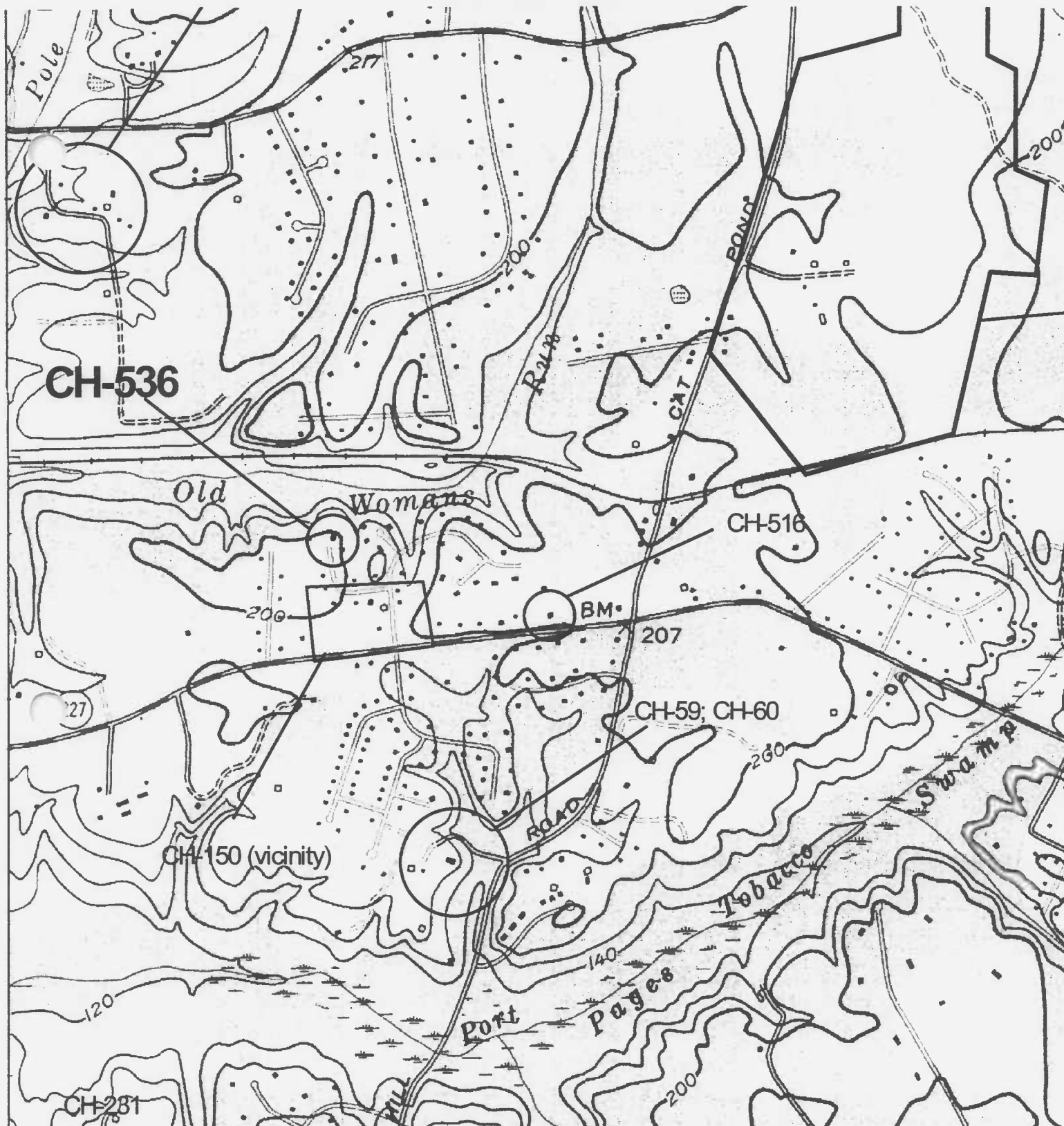
Ⓐ Location of original trim:



Ⓑ Location of original trim:







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Willett Farmhouse  
Charles County, MD

CH-536

LA PLATA, MD QUAD



CH-536

WILLETT FARMHOUSE  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD  
K.G. SMITH

4/99

MARYLAND SHPO

FACADE-LOOKING NORTH

1 OF 6



CH-536

WILLETT FARMHOUSE

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

MARYLAND SHPO

LOOKING SE

2 OF 6



CH-536

WILLETT FARMHOUSE  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

MARYLAND SHPO

EAST ELEVATION

3 OF 6





CH-536

WILLETT FARMHOUSE

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

MARYLAND SHPO

INTERIOR - STAIR LOOKING NW

4 OF 6



CH-536

WILLETT FARM HOUSE  
CHARLES COUNTY, MD  
K.G. SMITH  
MARYLAND SHPO  
SHED - LOOKING NE  
5 OF 6



CH-536

WILLETT FARMHOUSE

CHARLES COUNTY, MD

K.G. SMITH

MARYLAND SHPO

SHED - LOOKING SE

6 OF 6